



Lionel S. Reiss (American, 1894 - 1988)
Lunch Wagon, 1934
Watercolor on paper
16 1/4 x 21 inches (framed 25 x 29 inches)
Signed and dated Lionel S. Reiss 1934, lower right;
Signed, dated and titled on reverse
#20606



Lionel S. Reiss

Lionel S. Reiss was born to a Polish-Jewish family in Jaroslaw, Poland (located in the southwest region known as Galicia which at the time was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire). In 1898, at the age of four, he and his family immigrated to the United States, settling in the Lower East Side of Manhattan in New York City. He would spend much of his adult life as an artist painting and documenting the everyday urban life of New York.

Reiss studied illustration and found work as a commercial artist for newspapers and publishers, before being hired as the art director for Paramount Pictures (He is credited to be the creator of the Leo the Lion logo for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer).

Reiss became known for his portraits of Jewish people and landmarks in Jewish history, which he made during his trip to Europe, Africa, and the Middle East in the early 1920s. Being of Jewish heritage, Reiss became fascinated with Jewish life in the Old World. In 1919, Reiss temporarily left the United States to travel to the aforementioned regions, and recorded the life that he encountered in the ghettos. His trip resulted in exhibitions in major American cities in the 1930s. Reiss died on April 16, 1988, at his home in Central Park West in Manhattan. He was 94 years old.

Today, Reiss' art has been collected by many national museums and institutions, including the Brooklyn Museum; the Bezalel Museum, Israel; the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; the Smithsonian Institution, Jewish Museum, and the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, among others.

Source: "L. S. Reiss Dies at 94; Painter of Jewish Life". The New York Times. 20 April 1988.